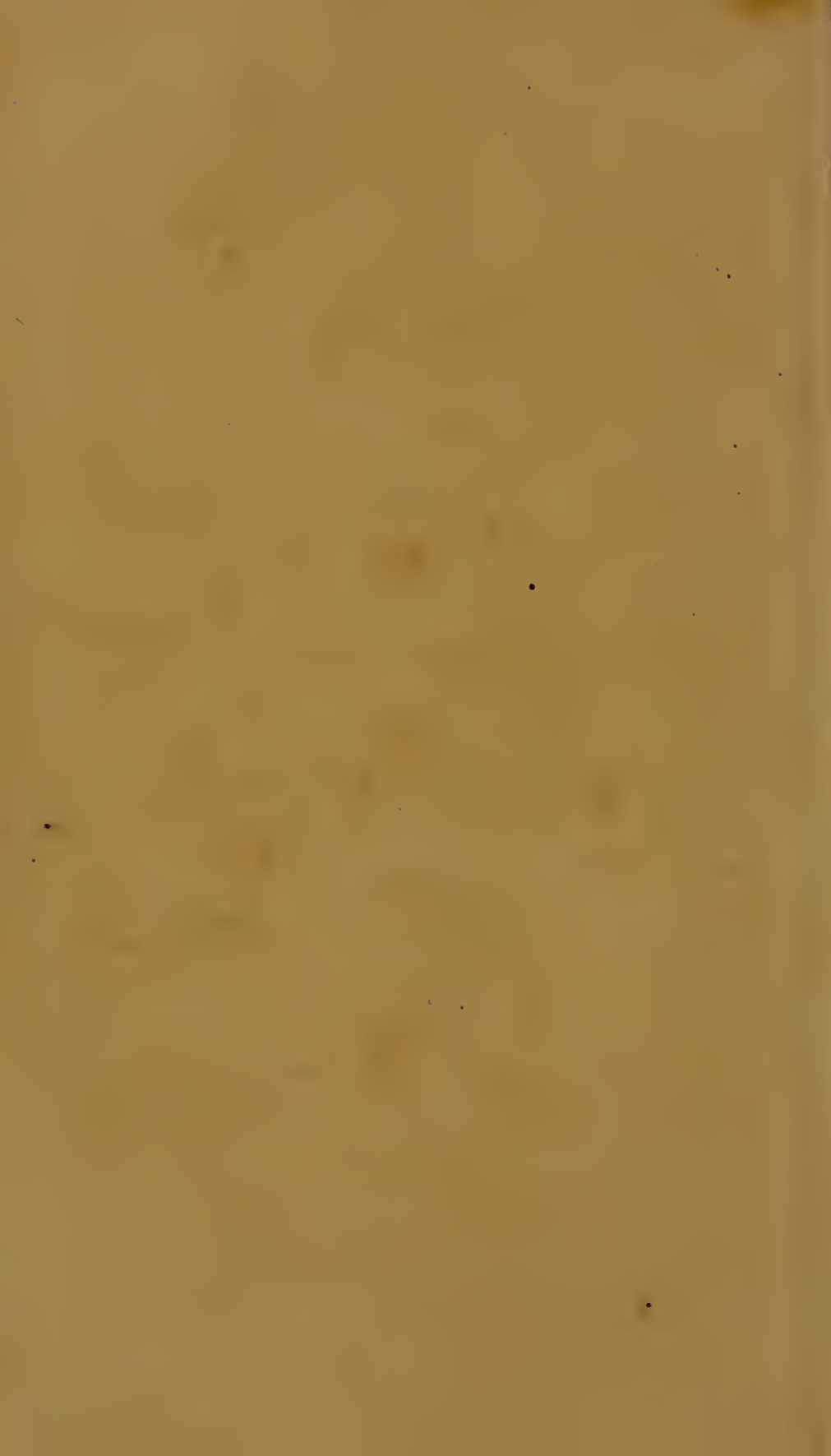




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*S K E T C H*  
OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL LIFE  
OF  
DR CLARK.

Mr. Grenville, Sharp with the  
Author's Compliments -

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S K E T C H  
OF THE  
PROFESSIONAL LIFE  
AND  
CHARACTER  
OF  
JOHN CLARK, M. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AT  
EDINBURGH, &c. &c.

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BY J. R. FENWICK, M. D.

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*Read at the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle  
upon Tyne, November, 1805.*

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1806.





## S K E T C H, &c.

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*Mr President and Gentlemen,*

I WAS led to undertake the following Sketch of the Life and professional Character of the late Dr Clark, by feeling strongly that a man who lived so honourably to himself, and so usefully for others, should not be allowed to sink into the grave unnoticed. I am confident that many in this Society will participate in the feeling, and that although his life was marked by no singular events, though I cannot offer to your consideration those splendid qualities which command admiration, you will yet take an interest in tracing the progress of a man most deserving of praise in private life,

and whose writings have improved the important art which he exercised.

But little is known of Dr Clark's early years. His father, Mr William Clark, was a respectable farmer at Graden in the parish of Roxburgh, at which place John, the subject of this memoir, was born, in May, 1744. Mr William Clark had seven sons, of which John was the eldest, and three daughters.

John was first sent to school at Linton, and afterwards removed to the grammar-school at Kelso about the year 1755, where Mr Dobie, a respectable teacher and good classical scholar, was at that time master. In that situation he remained till 1760. His studious disposition, and the great progress he made in learning, determined his father to educate him for the church, and he was accordingly removed for that purpose, in 1760, to the University of Edinburgh. These views were, however, unsuccessful. Whether his natural turn of mind led him to prefer the study of nature to abstract researches, or he received the bias from the character of the University, where the medical department is so justly pre-eminent, young Clark took no pleasure in the study of divinity, but expressed so strong and steady a predilection for medicine, that his father was induced

to comply with his inclination. But this determination and his son's studies were unfortunately interrupted by the accident of a slate falling from a house, and wounding him on the head; which gave rise to very severe head-achs and general nervous complaints, and was soon followed by a disordered state of the organs of digestion; a disease from which he was destined to suffer through life. Under these circumstances Mr Clark returned to Graden in the year 1761.

As soon as he had recovered his health sufficiently, he was, at his own request, bound an apprentice to a Mr Watson, at that time settled in Kelso, and who had been for many years a surgeon in the navy. From this we may conclude that his views were not then directed to that branch of the medical profession in which he afterwards became so distinguished. It is not known how long he remained with Mr Watson; but there is reason to suppose that he did not leave him till the autumn of 1766, when he returned to Edinburgh to pursue his medical studies.

By his diligence and abilities he there attracted the notice of the late Dr Gregory, at that time Professor of the Practtice of Physic; a man not more distinguished by his professional ta-

lents, than by his private worth, and by his just discernment and generous protection of merit. The countenance of so eminent a man was in itself highly honourable and advantageous to a young student; but Dr Gregory does not appear to have confined himself to mere approbation, but to have assisted him with his advice, and interested himself in his welfare with the activity of a friend. Mr Clark had but too soon occasion for his professional assistance. The complaints in his stomach, which attacked him soon after the accident before mentioned, now increased to an alarming degree, aggravated most probably by his sedentary life and close application, and as they resisted all the remedies employed by Dr Gregory to subdue them, he recommended it to Mr Clark, as a last resource, to try the effects of a warm climate. In consequence of this advice, Mr Clark's friends solicited and obtained for him an appointment, as surgeon's mate, in the East India Company's service—a situation in which, with the advantage of a warm climate, he enjoyed that of an opportunity of obtaining medical experience; nor can it be doubted, from his father's circumstances and the numerous family he had to support, that the acquirement of an immediate provision was also a material object with him.

I have not been able to learn the precise time of Mr Clark's leaving Edinburgh; but it is certain that he attended a course of medical lectures in London, before he entered on his appointment, as surgeon's mate, on board the Talbot Indiaman. In London he secured the good opinion of the celebrated Dr William Hunter; and he often, through life, expressed his gratitude to him, for admitting him to his lectures without paying the usual fees. He knew how to estimate the spirit in which Dr Hunter granted that indulgence, nor would his grateful disposition allow him to forget or depreciate any obligation, however small. It seems to me that such actions should not pass unnoticed: It is honourable to a young person to be thought worthy the patronage of eminent men; while, as proofs of their desire to encourage merit, such incidents, however trifling, reflect additional lustre on their abilities.

On the 22d of March, 1768, the Talbot sailed from the Downs, and, after touching at St Augustin's Bay in the island of Madagascar, anchored at Culpee, in the river of Bengal, on the 25th of August. In this situation the ship remained till the 22d of March, 1769, on which day, precisely a year after leaving the Downs, she began her voyage back to England. Mr



Clark, on his return, had a tedious and disagreeable voyage, not reaching Scilly till the 5th of January, 1770. During the absence of the Talbot from England, her crew suffered much from sickness, as well in the river of Bengal, as on the voyage home; and Mr Clark's diligence and judgment appear to great advantage, in the very accurate accounts he has preserved of the diseases, and of the methods of cure. On the 16th of February, 1771, he again sailed for India, in the same ship; reached Madras on the 25th of July, and, after remaining there a month, sailed for China, and arrived at Macao on the 19th of October, and Wampoa on the 25th. Here the Talbot continued till the 7th of March, 1772, when she began her voyage to England, and arrived in the Downs on the 1st of September. I have mentioned these few dates, as they enable us to judge of Mr Clark's opportunities of making observations on the effects of long voyages, and of the climate of India on the human constitution, and on the diseases to which it is liable. To enter into details would extend this memoir much beyond the prescribed limits; they are preserved in his *Observations on the Diseases which prevail in long Voyages to hot Climates*, a work first published in March, 1773. To what advantage Mr Clark

had turned his opportunities of obtaining professional experience, that work is an honorable proof; in the other object of his voyages, the improvement of his health, he was not so fortunate; his stomach complaints continued without remission in India, and seem indeed to have gathered additional force.

The winter after his arrival in England was passed in London, and dedicated to a further attendance on the hospitals, and to finishing and superintending the publication of his work. It had been communicated to Sir John Sylvester, by whose advice it was published, and was dedicated to the Court of Directors of the Company, from whom the author received a gratuity of a hundred guineas.

Mr Clark had no encouragement to return to India for the establishment of his health, and the high reputation which his work deservedly acquired, gave him reasonable hopes that he could derive from his profession, at home, advantages superior to any which the service of the Company offered. He now, therefore, resigned his situation, and turning his views to the medical branch of the profession, procured a diploma from the University of St Andrew's. He applied there instead of Edinburgh, because the rules of the latter University required a

further attendance on the medical schools, which would have retarded his establishment in practice.

In the course of 1773, Dr Clark settled as physician at Kelso, and soon acquired a considerable share of practice; but the situation was too limited to bound the views of a man who was conscious of such well-founded claims to public confidence, and he accordingly removed to Newcastle in 1775, upon Dr Wilson's quitting it for London. He had now a wide field for the display of his abilities; but it must be acknowledged that he entered upon it under no common difficulties. Dr Wilson, whose removal from Newcastle had induced him to settle there, had had but little business. The powerful recommendation of Dr Askew, had enabled Dr Brown to take a decisive lead in the profession. Dr Hall, a man of knowledge and talents, had also considerable practice, and besides them there were other medical candidates for the public confidence, of very respectable characters and connections. It is not surprising that Dr Clark, a stranger, and without introduction, advanced slowly against so powerful an opposition. But though the emolument of the profession was, in a great degree, preoccupied, he had an ample range for medical obser-



vation in the diseases of the poor; and neither his zeal for the improvement of his profession, nor his humanity, permitted him to neglect it. In his attendance on them, Dr Clark could not fail to perceive the hardships which those laboured under from the want of medicines and advice, whose cases excluded them from the Infirmary. To relieve this numerous class of sufferers, Dispensaries had, for some years, been established in most of the principal towns of Great Britain; and it is manifest, that, without an institution of that nature, the provisions for the relief of the poor in sickness must be incomplete. These considerations induced Dr Clark to propose the establishment of a Dispensary, in Newcastle, in the beginning of April, 1777; a proposal in which he was joined by his friend Mr Anderson, a surgeon of great respectability.

Strange as it must now appear, the plan was immediately opposed by the physicians to the Infirmary, as threatening destruction to that charity. It is probable the manner in which the proposal was made, might lead them to suspect that the conduct of the medical department was intended to be confined to the gentlemen who originally brought it forward; on which account, Dr Clark and his friend

thought it right to express their desire to act in concert with the rest of the faculty; and that, after an explanation had taken place between the parties, all opposition ceased, and the plan was, without delay, carried into execution.

Though Dr Clark's chief object in recommending a Dispensary to the inhabitants of Newcastle, was the relief of the poor, he did not overlook those arrangements which might render it the means of extending the limits of our art. He accordingly provided for keeping accurate journals of the patients admitted, and of their cases, by which the nature of prevailing epidemics might be ascertained the history of diseases illustrated, and the success of the modes of treatment more accurately known. He also drew up, and distributed among the poor who received relief at the Dispensary, some very judicious rules for preventing the production and propagation of contagion; but this most important branch of the charity was left incomplete; no means of prevention were carried into the houses of the poor, nor was any board of health established for the purpose of enforcing the execution of the rules. Dr Clark was, no doubt, aware of this defect; nor could he expect that his plan would prove adequate to the eradication of contagion; but the funds of the

charity were by no means equal to the establishment of a board of health, and to the cleansing and purifying the habitations of the poor. He therefore adopted the only means in his power. This deficiency of the funds of the Dispensary, is very strongly stated in several of the early reports of its proceedings; and a lamentable proof of it is found in the failure of a proposal, made by Dr Clark, for a general inoculation, in 1779, which was abandoned solely on that account. This very desirable object was not accomplished till 1786, from which time it has been continued annually.

For many years the success of the Dispensary depended chiefly on Dr Clark's exertions, and its annual Reports were constantly drawn up by him. The leisure which he had, after attending to the numerous cases of the poor, and to his private practice, (which was regularly, if not rapidly, increasing), he dedicated to the study of practical authors, and to the arrangement of his own observations. Fevers had attracted a great share of his attention during his voyages to India, as, indeed, they necessarily must, of every practitioner in hot climates; and while he continued to be, in so peculiar a degree, the physician of the poor, he had daily opportunities of extending his experience in

those diseases. The result of that experience he gave to the world in 1780, in his *OBSERVATIONS ON FEVERS*; a work in which he has displayed the same diligence of research, and the same fidelity in detailing the success of his practice, as characterise his first publication. Yet, while I feel these powerful claims to praise, I must acknowledge that it appears to me a less valuable work than the first. The class of febrile diseases have, at all times, baffled the researches of physicians. No adequate solution of their phænomena has yet been offered, though the most distinguished medical theorists have made them the first objects of their labours; and, what is more to be lamented, no mode of cure has been discovered on which we can, with confidence, rely for their removal. Dr Clark's principal view, in his publication, is to prove, that all the different denominations of fever are essentially the same disease, and only varieties of one genus; and to recommend the bark, as the only remedy on which we can rely, for the cure of continued fever. The frequent change of intermittent fevers into remittent, and afterwards into those of the continued type; the frequent occurrence of continued fevers first exhibiting remissions, and then assuming the intermittent character; the very considerable



variation which often takes place in the course of an epidemic ; and the many symptoms which all fevers have in common, are strong reasons for adopting the opinion of their being merely varieties of one and the same disease. But could we receive this doctrine with more confidence than the state of the question allows us, perhaps it would not materially contribute to improve the method of cure. Certain it is, at least, that, because the Peruvian bark is a cure for intermittents, it is not a necessary consequence of this theory that it must be effectual in the removal of continued fever. Much less considerable and less marked differences in diseases, sometimes require us to vary the mode of treatment.

Dr Clark, in his dissertation on fevers, has examined, with great care, the effects of the several remedies recommended in them : He has illustrated their operation by a faithful report of cases ; and his decisions on their respective defects, or efficacy, are so judicious, that they have been, in general, fully confirmed by experience. His early, large, and almost unrestricted use of the bark in continued fever, and the confidence with which he holds it out as a cure, appear to me not to have received that sanction. At this time he seems to have

thought that the only necessary preliminary to the free employment of the bark, was a proper cleansing of the *primæ viæ*. But considerable visceral determinations, which, in hot climates in particular, are frequent occurrences in that disease, and perhaps other states of the system, impose still further restrictions. Dr Clark seems himself to have been finally of this opinion, as he certainly, in the later years of his practice, was more sparing of its use. But if in the work we are now considering, he has carried his reliance on bark too far, it will not be denied that his mode of treatment was a very material improvement on the then prevailing practice. The abuse of venesection, the liberal and continued use of antimonials, and in general the great length to which the debilitating plan of treatment was carried, must often have produced the most fatal consequences; and by withholding the Peruvian bark till a remission occurred, or symptoms of putrescence appeared, it is certain that the practitioners of that day would often deprive the sick of all the advantages of that very valuable remedy. Dr Clark's publication on fevers appeared to me to call for these observations: I shall afterwards in considering his merits as a writer, have occasion again to advert to the subject.

In 1783, Dr Clark published a posthumous tract of Dr Dugad Leslie, on the contagious catarrh which raged so widely during the preceding summer, together with a letter of his own to the author on the same subject. The work presents a very faithful history of the epidemic, with some judicious remarks on its treatment; but as it does not throw much additional light on that singular disease, his chief object in publishing it was probably to pay a tribute to the memory of his deceased friend, who was snatched by a pulmonary consumption from a profession, of which, had he lived, he would have proved an ornament.

Doctor Clark's practice had been long increasing, and was now become very extensive; but, unfortunately, while he reaped the fruit of his professional zeal and knowledge, he suffered every year more and more from ill health. His stomach complaints harrassed him to a dreadful degree, and were accompanied by so great an irregularity in the action of the heart, especially on walking up an ascent, or other increased muscular motion, that he was led to suspect a local affection of that organ. Combined with this, he laboured under an almost total want of sleep, and all that endless train of sufferings which await on morbid irritability of

the nervous system. These exhausting complaints did not, however, induce him to relax in his professional assiduity; and the effect of his great success in treating diseases, was so great an increase of business, that for some time before Dr Brown's decease, he had the most extensive practice of any physician in Newcastle. On that event, which happened early in 1788, Dr Clark was, without opposition, elected physician to the Infirmary.

Notwithstanding the bad state of his health, and the multiplicity of his engagements, Dr Clark found time to revise his work on the diseases which prevail in long voyages to hot climates, of which, in 1792, he published a new edition. The many valuable additions which it contains, furnish satisfactory evidence of the excellent use he had made of his extensive experience; and as he has incorporated into it the substance of his *Observations on Fevers*, it is on this performance that his character as a medical writer rests. From this time the confidence of the public in his abilities daily increased, and soon put him in possession of as extensive business as has ever fallen to the share of any medical practitioner in the north of England.

Dr Clark had for some time called the attention of the governors to the defective state of



the Newcastle Infirmary. The statutes for its regulation, which were first established in 1751, and of which the second and last edition was printed in the following year, had many of them fallen into disuse, and from the great improvements in the management of hospitals introduced since that period, were unavoidably defective. A special court was therefore held November 6th, 1800, for their revisal, at which, in consequence of a report laid before them by Dr Clark, it was resolved, “ *That a Committee of Governors be appointed to take the Statutes, Rules, and Orders, into consideration, and to frame a Code for the future conduct of the Charity;*” with a further direction, to lay the result of their labours before the next quarterly court, or at latest before the general court in April. The alterations which Dr Clark proposed, were highly important, and extended to every branch of the management of the institution. The original building was itself, in many respects, defective; some of the wards were too large, and incapable of sufficient ventilation; many accommodations for the medical officers, which appear essential, were wanting; no separation of the medical and surgical patients could be made; and, finally, there was not room enough for the numbers claiming admission, and the

difficulty of rejecting those who were proper objects, often led to the wards being in much too crowded a state. Dr Clark proposed many judicious alterations to remedy these defects, and also drew up several very important regulations for the future conduct of the charity. He endeavoured to secure economy in the application of its funds, by the revival of the weekly committee, and by introducing a new mode of appointing the members, calculated to render it effective. A rule was established to prevent the election of medical officers being influenced by private solicitations or party spirit, which, where they take place, must often operate to the exclusion of merit. Nor did he overlook another most important object of hospitals, THE IMPROVEMENT OF MEDICAL SCIENCE. With a view to this he recommended, “*The keeping a journal of all instructive cases, or dissections, to be preserved in the hospital for the inspection of the physicians and surgeons; the keeping and preserving monthly and annual returns of the several diseases of the persons admitted; and, lastly, the appropriation of a place in the Infirmary for the reception of anatomical preparations, and of a professional library.*”

Dr Clark spared no trouble to make this code as perfect as possible, having not only consulted

the best writers on the subject of hospitals, but also corresponded with several eminent physicians, whose situations in improved and well-conducted infirmaries, furnished them with the best means of information. Nor did his zeal stop here. Thinking he observed a general lukewarmness towards the arrangements of the new code, he presented to every subscriber—"The result of an inquiry into the state of various infirmaries; a comparative view of the success of the practice in the improved and in the old infirmaries, and a proposal for the improvement and extension of the Infirmary at Newcastle." It was his ambition to render it a model for the improvement of similar institutions; and he sought to secure the active co-operation of the governors in his measures, by giving them incontrovertible evidence of the great advantages to be expected from them. Dr Clark's views met with the unanimous concurrence of the committee, who published his explanatory report of the intended regulations, on the 26th of March, 1801. A further committee was appointed by a special court, held June 25th, in the same year, "*To consider the expediency of the proposed internal improvements of the Infirmary, and to procure plans of the intended extension of the building, and estimates of*

*the expense attending the same."* A report of their proceedings and opinions thereon, was ordered to be printed, and circulated among the governors before their anniversary meeting in August. At that general meeting it was unanimously resolved, "*That the Infirmary, in its then state, was but ill calculated to answer the benevolent purposes of such an institution; a committee was empowered to carry the projected improvements into execution, and a subscription opened to defray the necessary expenses.*"

In the projected extension of the building, which thus received the unanimous sanction of the governors, were included wards for the reception of persons labouring under contagious fever; a provision without which, Dr Clark justly observes, "every infirmary must be very defective." In the original plan, 12 beds were assigned to this purpose, but considerable deviations from it were found necessary in the execution, and among others, the fever wards were enlarged so as to contain 20 patients. On this scale the building was erected, and as the wards were now sufficiently large for general accommodation, Dr Clark proposed the formation of a board of health, to carry rules of prevention into the houses of the poor, as the only further measure necessary to eradicate conta-



gion. A committee was accordingly formed in January, 1802, "*In order to promote an institution in Newcastle for the cure and prevention of contagious fevers.*" An object of great magnitude, and only to be effected by a general co-operation.

The committee entered on the business without delay, but when a proposal to admit contagious fevers into the fever wards annexed to the hospital was made by them to the weekly committee, it was referred by the latter to the physicians and surgeons of the charity, among whom, it then appeared, a difference of opinion prevailed as to its safety. It is to be lamented, that the opinions of all the medical officers of the charity had not been previously ascertained; and that in the original report, the fever wards are designated as destined to fever cases "*of accidental occurrence.*" Dr Clark informs us that he relied on his views being understood by the governors, and by his colleagues, from the extent of the fever wards; and it cannot be denied, that it would have been ridiculous to provide 12, and still more to prepare 20 beds, for fevers, if they were to be limited to cases of fever originating within an hospital, which can only contain 90 patients. The words "*accidental occurrence*" were introduced (as he states)

to prevent the agitation of the question of contagion, which, from the want of proper information, had in several places occasioned much alarm on the proposal of similar improvements; and accordingly, at the first reading of the report, he explained to the committee his reason for using those words. His intentions appear, however, to have been misunderstood, and as soon as the reference of the question to the physicians and surgeons had disclosed their full extent, an opposition to the measure was commenced by some of those gentlemen, and especially by one of much influence, and deservedly high professional reputation. The controversy to which this opposition gave rise, has been preserved by Dr Clark in his *COLLECTION OF PAPERS*. In his own papers, the arguments in favour of the limited action of contagion, and the means of preventing the progress of contagious diseases, are stated with great force and perspicuity; and he has supported them by a large and more valuable mass of evidence on the subject, than is any where to be found in the annals of medicine. As he was aware that the majority of the governors were unacquainted with the nature of the question, he also collected, with great labour, the sentiments of most of the leading medical characters of Great Bri-

tain, supposing that the weight of authority would influence the issue of the question. It happened otherwise; his plan, though supported by the unanimous approbation of his very numerous and most respectable professional correspondents, was rejected by a great majority of governors, at a general meeting, held June 24th, 1802.

Dr Clark greatly lamented the failure of his proposal. It had long been a favourite object with him to render the Newcastle Infirmary a model for similar institutions; but in the decision of the governors, he found an insuperable obstacle to his success. This alone was a very painful consideration, but he further thought the rejection of the measure was calculated to prove more extensively injurious, by impeding the adoption of similar establishments in other populous districts. Such establishments, he justly conceived, were capable of preventing or removing a greater portion of human misery, than any other medical charities; and he was fully persuaded, that a rational system for conducting them, could be founded only on the limited action of contagion. If, indeed, contagious miasmata exerted their influence at so indefinite a distance—if their virulence were not subdued by free dilution with air, it is difficult

to conceive how human efforts could arrest their progress. Such were the points of view in which Dr Clark saw the vote of the general meeting; and with such impressions, it could not fail to be extremely painful to a man, the leading features of whose character were benevolence and an ardent zeal for professional improvement. But I am far from wishing to conceal, that other feelings, of a more personal nature, contributed to his regret. It is difficult for the least selfish man, even in measures most purely of public utility, to go through a long and active struggle without something of a personal feeling mingling with his general views. It is always mortifying to be baffled in measures which have been pursued with ardour and perseverance; and it is, perhaps, impossible for contests of this nature to be so conducted as that no unpleasant circumstances shall attend them. The honorable tenor of Dr Clark's conduct through the whole of the business, the characters of his principal opponents, and the high respect they had for his private worth and professional abilities, were very likely to have prevented them on the present occasion. Unfortunately some such did take place, and he felt them severely. His health had for some time been visibly on the decline, and the ex-



cessive irritability of system which his disease produced, made him very unfit to contend with difficulties and opposition.

The increasing violence of Dr Clark's complaints (to which the great additional fatigue from his extensive correspondence on the subject of contagion certainly contributed,) now obliged him to consent to a temporary suspension of practice; and as he had, in the preceding year, under somewhat similar symptoms, derived essential advantage from the Buxton waters, he determined to try them again. He accordingly set out for Buxton in the following month. The short period of three weeks, to which he restricted his absence, was certainly inadequate to the removal, or considerable alleviation, of symptoms, which, by long continuance, had become constitutional, and had arisen to so alarming a height. He had, however, no inducement to prolong his stay at Buxton. Neither the bath nor the internal use of the waters were of any use to him, and he therefore obeyed the frequent calls which were made on him for advice, and, after visiting Manchester and Leeds, returned to Newcastle. During this tour he became personally acquainted with some distinguished medical practitioners, who were known to him from their

works, and with whom he had corresponded on professional subjects. Among these, the justly celebrated Dr James Currie met him, by appointment, at Buxton. Their respective writings and medical correspondence had inspired them with mutual esteem; they now became personally known to each other, and a great degree of confidence and intimacy obtained between them, which only terminated by Dr Clark's death. To the dreadful sufferings which led to that event, Dr Currie was long a witness; and, while he lamented the fatal progress of a disease which no human aid could remove, admired the unshaken fortitude and placid resignation which his friend displayed, and which he was himself called upon, after so short an interval, to exert. A disease which, at the period of his first interview with Dr Clark, had already made great progress, has since laid him also in the grave; and in a few months the medical profession has lost two of its brightest ornaments. At Manchester, Dr Clark saw the truly venerable Dr Percival, Dr Ferriar, and Mr White; and in discourse with them, those sufferings, which no medical aid could relieve, were, for the moment, suspended by the extraordinary interest which he always took in the judicious discussion of medical questions. The

vigour which he displayed in these conversations, under so much bodily languor, and so harassing a train of complaints, was remarked with surprise by the friend who accompanied him.

Besides these distinguished *medical* characters, Dr Clark shared, at Buxton, the society of the late Archdeacon Paley, whom he had advised to go there for the benefit of the waters. That truly eminent man was then engaged in finishing his NATURAL THEOLOGY; but the completion of that great undertaking was frequently interrupted by severe accessions of a painful disorder, under which he had long laboured, and which has since proved fatal. Dr Clark often expressed his admiration at the fortitude with which he bore the most painful attacks, and at the readiness, and even chearfulness, with which, on the first respite from pain, he resumed his literary labours. When it is considered that the 26th chapter of his work was written under these circumstances, what he has said of the ALLEVIATIONS OF PAIN acquires additional weight. It is not a philosopher in the full enjoyment of health, who talks lightly of an evil which he may suppose at a distance. When Dr Paley speaks of the power which pain has “*of shedding a satisfaction over intervals of ease,*

*which few enjoyments succeed ;*" and assures us, " *that a man resting from severe pain, is, for the time, in possession of feelings which undisturbed health cannot impart,*" the sentiment flowed from his own feelings. He was himself that man ; and it is consolatory, amidst the numerous diseases to which the human frame is liable, to find how compatible they are with a certain degree of comfort, and even enjoyment. Something may indeed be attributed, in Dr Paley, to a vigour of intellect, which is allotted to very few ; but it cannot be doubted, that resignation in suffering is less the gift of great intellectual powers, than of well-regulated religious and moral sentiments.

From the enjoyment of society so well suited to his disposition and pursuits, he was called by his professional duties ; and it is to be lamented that with them he resumed his plan for annexing general fever wards to the Newcastle Infirmary. I have before mentioned how much importance he attached to it ; and he moreover felt himself bound to his medical correspondents, to neglect no means of carrying a measure, which, at his request, they had exerted themselves to support. Such were the motives which induced him to recommend an application to the Bishop of Durham, as Grand Visitor of the

charity, to appoint a general meeting to take into consideration the propriety of the vote of the 24th of June. A requisition, very numerously and respectably signed, was accordingly transmitted to his Lordship, who, in compliance with it, directed a general meeting to be held on the 12th of October. At that meeting, a much more numerous attendance of governors took place, than had ever been known; but as the plan for admitting contagious diseases into the fever wards had excited very great alarm, it was not thought for the interest of the charity to press the question. A compromise therefore took place, by which it was agreed, that if a separate fever house, approved by the Grand Visitor, were not ready by the 31st of October, 1803, he should be empowered to open the fever wards of the hospital for the general reception of patients. Though the plans which Dr Clark had so earnestly recommended were thus laid aside, he had yet the pleasure to accomplish, in another way, the chief objects which he had in view. By the addition to the building, which he projected and executed, the Infirmary has become adequate to the purposes of that benevolent institution; and a fever house having been established, it is hoped that it will lead to the appointment of a board of health,



and to the adoption of those regulations by which the town of Newcastle, and its populous neighbourhood, may be rescued from the baneful effects of contagion.

From this time Dr Clark's health gradually declined. His constitutional 'stomach complaints became more violent, and the irregular action of the heart which accompanied, and was certainly aggravated if not produced by them, gained proportional strength. The general languor and irritability of the habit were also greatly increased, and the few hours he allotted to rest, were passed in watchfulness or broken and disturbed slumbers. Those who have suffered from similar complaints, will know how to estimate the zeal and vigour of mind which enabled him, under their pressure, to pursue his professional duties with undiminished assiduity. These exertions, and the resistance his constitution (in many respects a strong one) made to his complaints, concealed their progress in a great degree; and his friends and the public were flattering themselves that his most valuable life might be prolonged for many years, when, in the last week of October, 1804, he was first attacked by that disease which was destined to close it. Without apparent cause, he was seized with violent pain of the stomach

and bowels, attended by a total interruption of the functions of the latter, and by severe nausea. The means which he employed, however, soon removed these symptoms, and he continued free from them, under the use of very mild remedies, for near three weeks after. On the 13th of November, he had a second and much more severe attack. The violence of the symptoms gave rise to suspicions of inflammation, and excited the most serious apprehensions for his immediate safety. They were again after a few days removed, but not till the most powerful remedies had been employed. Amidst the alarm which this very severe attack awakened in the minds of his medical friends, they observed, with still greater apprehension, both in the mode of its accession and in the symptoms which marked its progress, many strong indications of organic lesion in the stomach, or in some portion of the alimentary canal. The melancholy prospect this opened, of severe and protracted suffering, could not be hidden from Dr Clark. Even before the attack in October, he had seen reason to suspect the existence of some organic affection in the organs connected with digestion. These suspicions were greatly increased by that attack, and in the course of the second were confirmed to a degree which never after yielded to any

steady hope of recovery. He expressed this opinion of his case with firmness and composure; argued, with perfect possession of mind, on the probable origin of its symptoms, on the inadequacy of any means the art of medicine furnishes to their removal, and on the protracted sufferings to which he was probably reserved. To the reasons his medical advisers adduced to remove or weaken this conviction, and which the obscurity that hung over his case in some points furnished them with, he answered with great force and precision. It was not the language of despondency. He admitted that the doubts they suggested had some weight; but, balancing the difficulties of the different conclusions with a strength of judgment which rose superior to hope and fear, he formed his inference with as much correctness as if he had been called to decide on the case of a stranger.

It is fortunate for those who are doomed to sink under lingering disorders, when they are ignorant of their nature, and of the sufferings which await them. The present are not aggravated by the anticipation of future evils, and the fatal term to which the disease is tending, opens, often slowly and by almost imperceptible gradations, upon them. To see the inevitable



yet slow approach of death; to be aware that the path to it will be marked by excessive pain; nay, to be able, from a knowledge of the nature of the disease, to foresee, in a great measure, the peculiar nature of the sufferings which it is likely to produce in its course, is indeed a trying situation. This trial it was Dr Clark's fate to experience, from this period to that of his death; and the resignation and fortitude he displayed under it, were proofs of no ordinary mind.

Though the obstruction which had threatened his life was overcome, there was nothing like a return of health. The functions of the important organs, which had been the seat of disease, were never duly restored; and even the short interval he was allowed from violent symptoms was passed in constant uneasiness. Not only the appetite for food wholly abandoned him, but he felt, in general, an absolute loathing of it; and, for much the greater part of the day, was harrassed by a sensation always bordering upon, and often amounting to, real nausea;—the morbid irritability of his nervous system was also much increased, and his nights were sleepless. Under the accumulated weight of these complaints, he returned to his professional avocations. His medical advisers thought it best

to consent to this in a limited degree. It was found almost impossible for him to refuse complying with the urgent applications for advice, while he went out for the advantage of exercise, and absolute confinement was found very injurious to him. He gave also abundant proof that his mind had lost nothing of its vigour, and could go through the necessary exertions without fatigue, while he was apt to sink into dejection when perfectly inactive. Dr Clark always expressed his conviction that this permission was beneficial; and though it may not be wholly safe to draw an inference from his opinion, attached as he was to a life of utility and action, yet certainly every appearance supported it. It is often a question of some difficulty, in the management of chronic diseases, to determine on the degree of mental and bodily exertion which should be allowed. The previous habits and temper of mind must be consulted in forming the conclusion, as well as the nature of the disease and constitution; and when these are duly considered, many more restrictions to the rule of ease and quiet will be found advisable than are perhaps generally admitted. But though moderate exertions might not only be innocent, but even salutary, there could be no doubt of the pernicious effects of unseasonable hours and

fatigue; yet how is a physician to limit his attendance when he engages in practice? To no practitioner would it be an easy task; to Dr Clark, who, from professional zeal and benevolence, had always sacrificed his personal ease and comfort to the welfare of those who consulted him, it was perhaps impossible.

The respite, during which he engaged once more in business, did not last many weeks; the diseased organs were evidently unequal to their offices; and, even under apparently considerable action of the remedies employed, his bowels allowed a gradual accumulation. Total obstruction again ensued; the same harrassing train of symptoms returned; and though immediate danger was once more removed, the attack left him with reduced strength, and with additional evidence of fixed local affection. Similar accessions became more frequent during the month of December, while the troublesome symptoms which continued during the intervals gained strength, and his increasing debility and waste of substance, pointed out at once the dangerous nature of his disease, and the inadequacy of the remedies employed to remove it. Unfortunately those medicines were, not only in the opinions of his medical friends who attended him at Newcastle, but in those of other most

eminent physicians who were consulted by him, the most powerful and best adapted to his case.\* In this urgent crisis they unanimously recommended the use of Cheltenham, and afterwards of Bath, waters; and as he felt that the trial should not be delayed, he set out for Cheltenham on the 22d of January, 1805.

From the waters of Cheltenham he experienced no benefit; and therefore, as a last resource, about the close of February, quitted that place for Bath. While he remained at Cheltenham, he suffered repeated attacks; during the last of which, for the first time, the nature of what was rejected by vomiting afforded incontrovertible evidence of the inverted action of the stomach being communicated to a considerable portion of the bowels; a symptom from which, Dr Clark observed, he had only known one or two miraculous cases of recovery.

The bad accounts which Dr Clark had transmitted to the writer of this narrative from Cheltenham, had prepared him for an unfavourable

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\* Among the physicians consulted by Dr Clark at this time, was the present very eminent PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE OF PHYSIC in the University of Edinburgh, for whose great professional abilities, and highly diversified talents, he entertained the utmost respect.

change in his appearance, and he accordingly found him much weakened and reduced in substance; but, except in moments of excruciating pain, or of sickness more intolerable than pain, his mind continued calm and unshaken. He evidently entertained no hopes of the removal of his complaints, or even, of considerable alleviation to them from the Bath waters; but he seemed to feel satisfaction in proving his respect for the opinions of his medical friends, by a punctual compliance with their advice. At Bath he was attended by Drs Haygarth and Falconer, who had long been his correspondents, and by his friend Dr James Currie, whom increasing ill health had compelled to quit his situation at Liverpool for a less laborious practice. Under these distinguished physicians, his friends had at least the consolation to feel that no assistance was wanting which medical ability and knowledge could supply.

For some time the warm bath, and the internal use of Bath water, seemed of service. His nights were rather better, and he was able to take more nourishment. He had also a respite from an attack of nearly double the length of any which he had enjoyed for the two preceding months. Still, however, not a day passed without considerable and continued nausea, and



frequent pain. His loathing of food, in some degree, continued: He rarely slept for more than half an hour together, and his days were passed in languor, and often in an intolerable state of nervous irritation. Under these unfavourable appearances, though he rather improved in looks and strength, neither Dr Clark nor his medical friends could be sanguine in their hopes that his disease was yielding, or that they could prevent a return of obstruction. Their apprehensions were but too soon realized;—symptoms of gradual accumulation in the bowels again returned; and notwithstanding every effort was made to avert the evil, complete obstruction took place, and brought with it all the dreadful train of sufferings which he had so often undergone. No previous attack had been so severe; for several days it resisted the most powerful remedies; and he at one time seemed sinking under the violence of the symptoms, and the strong action of the medicines employed to remove them. In this state he sent for his second son, then at Cambridge; the eldest was at too great a distance, to allow a reasonable hope of his arrival before his father's dissolution.

Dr Clark considered his recovery from this almost hopeless situation as a momentary respite, which could only serve, by affording an

interval for recruiting his strength, to prolong and aggravate his sufferings; but that painful conviction did not deprive him of his fortitude, or prevent him from taking pleasure in the society of his friends. Among those with whom he spent most time at this period was Dr Currie, and it was peculiarly affecting to see those very distinguished men together in the situation in which they then were. As to Dr Clark, the hand of death was raised over him, and every day brought with it a dread that the blow would be inflicted. Without the same strong evidence of immediate danger, Dr Currie had too decisive indications of the existence of mortal disease, and of no distant dissolution. They each were aware of their own and of their friend's situation; and the deep regret each manifested for the other's danger, was made more striking by the manly composure with which they viewed their own. The hours they spent together were usually employed in medical discussions, or in the consideration of plans for professional improvement; and the lively interest those topics inspired, the animation, and even cheerfulness, with which they conversed on them, strongly evinced their benevolence, their zeal for their profession, and their intellectual vigour. At these interviews the author of this SKETCH was

usually present, and the impression which they made on him can never be effaced.

The relief which Dr Clark at this time experienced, turned out more considerable than he or his medical friends had dared to expect; nor can it be denied that a faint degree of hope was raised in their breasts. The effect of the remedies by which the action of the bowels was promoted, proved more favourable than on any former occasion: He began to take more food, and to sleep a little better; in short, though he had many distressing feelings, which at once destroyed his comfort and afforded very strong presumption of the unsubdued state of his disease, he certainly had, during this last period, more flattering symptoms than in any former interval. But the close of his sufferings was at hand. On the 4th of April he was seized with bilious vomiting, attended by great general irritation of the system, and intolerable languor. These symptoms continued through a great part of the night, but were relieved before morning, and he passed the two following days much in his usual state. On the 7th he had a similar attack, and it became apparent that the disordered state of his stomach was connected with, and in all probability dependent on, accumulation in the bowels. This state was the more

alarming, because no means had been neglected to obviate its recurrence. The remedies used to remove it, were not more effectual than those employed for prevention. On the evening of the 11th, symptoms of peritoneal inflammation manifested themselves; and though partial relief was repeatedly obtained, the inflammation ran its course uninterrupted, and terminated on the 19th in mortification. Under this, and absolute inanition from want of nourishment, he sunk in the evening of that day. It is not my wish to dwell on the sufferings which marked this last period of his life. Perhaps no state of disease to which the frame is liable, can produce any more difficult to endure. The most excruciating pain was accompanied by, or alternated with, that harassing sickness which accompanies inflammation of the intestines. Opiates, which for a time allayed the symptoms, at length lost their effect, and his nights became almost entirely sleepless. It is surprising that, after so protracted and severe an illness, his constitution should have struggled so long with these accumulated evils; and with so small a portion of food, that it seemed insufficient to support life, even if no morbid action had been present to undermine it. It would not be doing justice to Dr Clark's memory merely to say,



that he bore the trial with fortitude; in truth, he exhibited to the last, the leading features of his character—warm attachment to his friends and relatives, general benevolence, and anxiety for the improvement of his profession. He expressed, with unfeigned feeling, his regret that Mrs Clark and their second son should have the pain of witnessing his sufferings; and studied, by all possible means, (though they were generally defeated by their affectionate assiduity,) to remove them from the painful scene, at the most trying moments. Within four days of his death, while labouring under the fatal symptoms which indicated its immediate approach, he enquired into the case of one of his friends with anxious solicitude; examined his complaints with apparently as much interest, and as uninterrupted attention, as if he had himself been at ease and well; and gave his opinion and directions with his accustomed clearness and precision. His attachment to his profession was conspicuous through the whole of his illness. The introduction of a medical topic of importance, had always the effect of calling, for the time, his thoughts from his own situation; nor was the interest and animation they excited, more remarkable than his perfect recollection, unimpaired judgment, and clear discrimination.



Dr Clark's remains were, at his own request, deposited, on the 24th of April, in the churchyard of Weston, near Bath; near the grave of his friend, the late Mr Bigge, of Benton House, near Newcastle.

Dr Clark was twice married. By his first wife, who was a widow, he had two children; both of which died in early infancy. In 1783 he married Miss Susan Heath, of Newcastle; by whom he had a daughter and eight sons; of whom four and the daughter have with her survived to deplore his loss.

Though it is chiefly as a professional man that I wish to offer Dr Clark to the notice of the society, I cannot refrain from touching slightly on his great respectability in private life. We there find him an affectionate husband and father, a warm and steady friend, an indulgent master, a man of unbounded benevolence, and equally inaccessible to suspicion and incapable of practising deceit. This extraordinary simplicity of character, is always interesting; and when united with great intellectual powers, becomes peculiarly attractive. Dr Clark was rather hasty in his temper; a fault which is so often connected with great and generous qualities, that it generally meets with too much indulgence in society; nay, is often absurdly

considered as an indication of those virtues with which it is not unfrequently united.\* He was a firm believer in Christianity, and had a pleasure in remarking the effect which a reliance on its truths, and the practice of its duties have in enabling men to bear the evils of life with resignation, and to meet death with firmness.

I will now proceed to consider his merits as a practical physician; a character in which I knew him some years before I became acquainted with him in private life.

Doctor Clark was formed to excel in the profession he exercised. He took infinite delight in observing the phænomena, and investigating the laws, of animal life; and his quick perception, extraordinary powers of discrimination, sound judgment, and unwearied industry, admirably qualified him to study them with effect. No man was ever more thoroughly attached to his profession; all the energies of his very powerful mind were directed to it. Its improvement was the first object of his life; and to it he sacrificed not only those pursuits

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\* In him this defect was greatly checked by his benevolent attention to the happiness of others; and perhaps, by so displaying the genuine goodness of his heart, contributed to render his character more interesting.

which inactive and unemployed men consider as pleasures, for which he probably had little relish, but likewise society, which his frank and friendly disposition peculiarly fitted him to enjoy. By thus making his profession at once the business, and (were such an expression applicable when a humane mind experiences so much anxiety I would say) the pleasure of his life; and by an orderly distribution of his time, he was enabled, in the height of his most extensive practice, to give full and deliberate attention to every case submitted to him. Under unusual pressure of business, his hours of rest, which were at no time more than seemed absolutely necessary, were shortened to a degree that must have been hurtful to his health; but he was always ready to encounter personal fatigue and hardship, rather than hurry from his patients before he had made himself completely master of every circumstance which could assist him in judging of their diseases; and fully attended to every point which could contribute to their relief. He also listened with benevolence to the diffuse, and occasionally irrelevant, details which severe suffering will draw at times from even the most resigned and sensible persons. When a physician shows this attention to their feelings, it always affords great

consolation to the sick; and though he will sometimes be detained by useless details, he will often acquire by it a knowledge of facts which will materially assist him in forming his opinion. It is, moreover, by thus allowing the sick to express their feelings without hurry or interruption, that a physician best acquires a knowledge of their state of mind; a thing of great importance in the cure of diseases.

His written directions to the sick displayed his intimate knowledge of the nature and operation of medicines. He wielded, indeed, the most active with great safety and effect, in consequence of the judicious means he employed to regulate their action. His instructions were also distinguished by their perspicuity, and by the minute details to which they extended. Nothing which could be useful was omitted; nor could his intentions be misunderstood, even by those who were least accustomed to attend the sick.

Neither the superior degree in which Dr Clark possessed, for many years, the confidence of the public, nor the deference his experience and ability drew from other practitioners, ever betrayed him into a peremptory or dictatorial manner in consultation. He listened to the opinions of others with attention; and in deli-



vering his own, always adduced the reasons on which it was founded. It was his custom to give, without reserve, his sentiments on all the bearings of the case under consideration; and to detail, much at large, whatever practical facts, capable of illustrating it, had occurred to him in practice, or in the course of his reading. His manner, on such occasions, was singularly happy; it was free from pretensions to superior knowledge or sagacity, or to unusual success in practice. If he were earnest and copious in delivering his opinion, it was evidently occasioned by his whole mind being given to the subject, and by the abundance of information he possessed. He had, indeed, in the course of his extensive reading of practical authors, and of his own experience, stored up an immense collection of medical facts, which he recollected not only in their out-lines, but in all the details which could, in any degree, illustrate their nature. Perhaps he never forgot a case which had once attracted his notice; an advantage for which he was probably not more indebted to the strength of his memory, (though he certainly possessed that faculty in a great degree) than to his accuracy of observation, and to the extraordinary attention he paid to the progress of diseases. Extensive as his practical knowledge



was, it was not more conspicuous than the judgment and discrimination with which he applied it.

There are practitioners who found their claims to superior sagacity on a certain quickness in forming their judgment; and who would willingly persuade the world, that they can, as it were, at one glance, look into the nature of diseases. To them, the merit of patient investigation may appear a doubtful praise. But if they be sincere in those pretensions, and do not use them as a veil for idleness or ignorance, it does little credit to their judgment. The march of nature in the animal economy is so obscure; diseases are so often complicated, and so much varied by difference of constitution and other incidental causes, that a hasty observer must be incessantly deceived. Dr Clark was convinced of this; and the same patience of investigation which laid the foundation of his professional eminence, distinguished him to the last.

No physician ever sympathised more strongly with his patients. He was, in truth, a man of warm and genuine benevolence; and all his manner with the sick, evinced how much he felt for their sufferings. His address, which, in the ordinary intercourse of life, had an appearance

of roughness, was to them remarkably mild and encouraging. He neglected nothing which could sooth their minds, or contribute to their comfort; and his friendly and unaffected expression of interest in their welfare, gave them unbounded confidence in his endeavours to relieve them. It was this which attached his patients so strongly to him, that nearly all those who had been long under his care regarded him in the light of a friend. Mere knowledge and abilities, though they might ensure public confidence, could not produce such strong and general attachment. Disposed to value solid and useful knowledge, rather than brilliant acquirement, Dr Clark seems at no time to have been misled by a proneness to theory. Of this we have evidence in his first publication, which is strictly practical; though it in parts treats of subjects connected with the splendid system which then prevailed in the University where he received his education. This unbiassed and temperate judgment must have greatly assisted his early acquisition of experience, and contributed to his eminence as a practical physician. It is, indeed, difficult for any one, who has not been much conversant with medical men and medical practice, to conceive, how entirely an attachment to theory unfits a physician for

observation. When once this obtains to a great degree, only those phænomena are looked for, or attended to, which accord with the favourite hypothesis. Facts are made, almost imperceptibly, to bend to it; and the mind, deluded by plausible conjecture, becomes insensible to the real appearances of nature. How long and extensively, nay, with how much assiduity, and, in other respects, with how much ability, a physician under this fatal influence may practise, without acquiring genuine experience, is too forcibly proved by the history of medicine. But, although upon his guard against the illusions of system, Dr Clark was far from agreeing with those who reject reasoning in physic altogether. Were this principle carried to its full extent, it is difficult to conceive how a physician could derive any advantage from experience. But absolute empiricism perhaps never exists; and they who, under the general term of theory, object to reasoning altogether, seem only to differ from others in reasoning more loosely. Dr Clark, on the contrary, was eminently distinguished by the correctness of his reasoning from analogy, and by the clearness with which he drew his inferences; distinguishing, with great perspicuity, the leading symptoms which indicate the peculiar nature of the

disease, from incidental appearances ; and bringing together, or contrasting, in the most satisfactory manner, the points of resemblance, or difference, between the case to be decided on, and those which he adduced in illustration.

In the same proportion as he was patient and cautious in forming his opinion, was his practice vigorous and decisive. It becomes indeed only those who have sedulously employed all the means of acquiring a just idea of a disease to adopt the use of powerful remedies. Boldness of practice, where the opportunities of information are neglected, is most reprehensible, inhuman rashness.

With so rare an assemblage of the qualities most essential to a physician, it will be naturally concluded that his practice was unusually successful. It was, indeed, his distinguished success that first introduced him to general employment, against a very formidable opposition ; and unaided by powerful connections, by superior polish of manners, or by any of those arts which sometimes raise mediocrity of talents to distinction ; and by it, when the sphere of his business was enlarged, he secured the confidence of the public to a degree which has never been exceeded. I have before mentioned that Dr Clark dedicated his whole time and attention to



his profession. He did so to a degree which interfered considerably with his attainment of general knowledge. It may, perhaps, by some be thought an advantage to a practical physician thus to confine his studies to objects purely medical; and in reference to Dr Clark, it must be allowed that he was remarkable for that correctness of reasoning, and comprehension of mind, which are the best result of an extensive cultivation of science. But in a general view of the question, it seems to me, that in medicine, as in other liberal professions, an enlarged range of knowledge contributes to professional eminence. Dr Clark was not in this respect really defective, but certainly his acquaintance with general science was not proportioned to the distinguished rank which his medical abilities have assigned him.\*

But it is not merely as an able practitioner that Dr Clark has claims to our notice; he is entitled to the higher praise of having improved

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\* As few men possessed equal opportunities of judging of Dr Clark's professional abilities, or are so competent, from their own knowledge and judgment, to form a just estimate of them as Dr Ramsay, the author took the liberty of requesting his sentiments, and is now happy to lay them before the public.—See *Appendix*.



the art of medicine by his writings. It is not my intention to enter on a critical examination of them here; they are too well known, and too justly appreciated by the medical world, for such an examination to be an act of justice to his memory; and it would be peculiarly misplaced in addressing a society which has excluded all professional subjects from their disquisitions. His character as a writer must not, however, pass altogether unnoticed:

When we reflect how early in life the materials of Dr Clark's first great work were collected, we find in it very conclusive evidence of the sound judgment of the author. We see him, in early youth, pursuing, with undeviating step, the only track which can lead to the discovery of truth. We every where trace the fruits of correct and patient observation; and accordingly his *History of the Diseases of hot Climates* has been confirmed by the best writers who have followed him in that field of inquiry. No attachment to system, no submission to authority, diverts him from watching the operations of nature; of her he is at all times an unbiassed and discriminating observer. The extensive knowledge of the best methods at that time known of treating diseases, which he displays in that work, is certainly highly credit-

ble to so young a practitioner; while the justness of his remarks on them, his clear and correct descriptions of diseases, his comprehensive views of their relation and connection, and his just estimate of the degree in which climate operates in varying their progress, all show how well he was qualified for the task he undertook. When to this we add the very judicious advice he has laid down for obviating the bad effects of warm climates on European constitutions, and the precision with which he speaks of the action of medicines, we shall not hesitate to recommend this work as the best guide extant for those who practise physic in hot climates. He has further, in more instances than one, had the merit of extending the powers of medicine, by discovering or contributing to the introduction of new methods of cure in some very formidable diseases. Under this head, our attention is principally called to the application of mercury to the cure of acute rheumatism and dysentery, and to some states of remittent and continued fever. On these, with the permission of the society, I shall make some observations in the order they are mentioned.

**ACUTE RHEUMATISM.**—Mercury had been employed in chronic rheumatism before Dr Clark began practice, though it certainly had

not come into general use. He learned the practice, as he informs us, from Sir John Sylvester; and the justly celebrated Dr Fothergill had also added the weight of his authority, by recommending it in sciatica, about the period of Dr Clark's second return from India. In acute rheumatism no one, so far as I know, had ventured to employ it; indeed the prevailing opinion of its tendency to induce an inflammatory diathesis, was in direct opposition to its use in that state of the disease. Dr Clark has the credit of setting aside that ill-founded hypothesis, and of exhibiting that powerful remedy in the acute, which he had before found so effectual in chronic, rheumatism. He at first thought it necessary to premise bleeding and antimonials; but his experience soon taught him that, unless the local inflammation was considerable, or a pleuritic stitch took place, those precautions were unnecessary. He has assured us, and my observation confirms the truth of his assurance, that by this mode of treatment the disease is soon subdued, the chronic state almost certainly prevented, and all danger effectually obviated. This method of cure seems to me a very material improvement. When treated by bleeding and sudorifics, the disease was generally lingering; the local inflammations wandered

from joint to joint, often returning to their first seat; gelatinous effusions frequently took place under the tendons; the chronic disease was almost always induced, and sometimes, inflammation seizing upon some important organ, the attack proved fatal. These evils are effectually obviated by an early and judicious use of mercury.

DYSENTERY.—Though Dr Clark is not exclusively entitled to the praise of discovering the efficacy of mercury in this disease, yet he began to employ it, before he knew that others had adopted the practice; and by his decisive testimony of its virtues, and his judicious method of exhibiting it, has certainly contributed to bring it into general use. It appears that mercury had not been applied to the cure of dysentery in India, when Dr Clark left it in his last voyage; but that soon after his return, a successful trial of its powers was made in that disease, which Dr James Lind communicated to the public in 1787. In the mean time Dr Clark had carried the practice to a great length in an epidemic dysentery at Newcastle; and certainly he pursued a much more efficacious method of using it, than had been generally followed by the practitioners in India. By them it was given in the form of extinguished quicksilver,



in very small doses, combined with ipecacuana, which was at that time much relied on in the cure of fluxes; but, as Dr Clark has justly observed, mercury seems in that form to be better calculated for dysenteries when supported by a diseased state of the liver, than for the disease in its pure and active state. Dr Clark himself exhibited calomel in doses proportioned to the urgency of the symptoms, the strength of the patient, and to the readiness with which it acted on the system; cautiously avoiding salivation, the injurious consequences of which he has very properly insisted on.

Conducted in this manner, the treatment of dysentery by mercury seems to me one of the most important improvements which have for many years been introduced into medicine. The former method of cure, though, when early employed and in slight cases, it was usually effectual, was much too feeble to remove the very formidable affections of the bowels which frequently take place in bad or neglected cases. These, on the contrary, rarely resist, even in very advanced states, the judicious employment of mercurials; on which, unless where the structure of the intestines is irretrievably injured, we may safely rely for the cure of this disease, formerly so fatal, especially in fleets and armies.



While he advises this mode of treatment, Dr Clark judiciously guards against its exhibition in those cases where dysentery is combined with scurvy.

In some states of REMITTENT FEVER, Dr Clark has also, from his general view of its action, recommended the trial of Mercury. When local affections of the abdominal viscera attend the disease, (such as slight inflammation or obstruction of the liver, a dysenteric state of the intestines, or great irritability or inflammation of the stomach,) he considers it, combined with opium, to be the best remedy which can be had recourse to. This suggestion has been confirmed by several eminent physicians, as well in Europe, as in the East Indies and America. It is unnecessary to quote those who have published the result of their experience, but it may be of use to notice some private testimonies of the efficacy of the practice which Dr Clark received from gentlemen who made trial of it on his authority. Mr Alexander Weir, who had practised for more than twenty years in Jamaica, having experienced the inefficacy of every other method of cure, promised Dr Clark to try the effects of mercury on his return to Jamaica in 1792. He accordingly did so, and informed him, by letter, that the method had been suc-

cessful in his own practice, and had met the approbation of his medical friends. He further promised to transmit the details of his experience to Dr Clark; but his death, which happened soon after, prevented the accomplishment of his intentions. The ingenious Dr Wardell, of Alnwick, who also made trial of mercury in remittent fever on Dr Clark's authority, has given a still more decisive testimony in its favour. Dr Clark had, previous to that gentleman's going out with Lord Grey to the West Indies in 1793, stated to him his opinion, (founded both on the symptoms and the appearances on dissection,) that the fatal termination of the yellow fever was most commonly produced by local inflammation; and advised the trial of calomel and opium on the first accession of the disease; to be repeated frequently, so as speedily to affect the system or open the bowels, as the most likely means of effecting the cure. Dr Wardell, on his return, informed him "that vomiting was the most untoward symptom he had to encounter in the cure of the yellow fever; that emetics almost always produced bad effects, and often gave rise to unappeasable retchings; that after experiencing the baneful effects of some, and the general inefficacy of all the medicines employed to relieve that symp-

tom, he had made trial of calomel and opium on Dr Clark's authority." Where the irritability of the stomach and vomiting were attended by copious discharges of bile, Dr Wardell always combined opium with calomel; "but in those cases where the vomiting was, either from the first or soon after the commencement of the fever, unattended by a bilious discharge; or even where bile disappeared in an after-state of the disease," his sole dependence was on mereury. Dr Wardell adds "that the vomiting seldom ceased; and a free bilious evacuation was seldom procured till some soreness of the gums, or a mercurial fœtor took place:" A convincing proof that it was not as a purgative, but by exerting its peculiar action on the system, that the calomel produced the desired effects. When once that action was excited, Dr Wardell observes, "the stomach usually retained the bark, the good effects of which were then strikingly displayed."\* Other practitioners

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\* These extracts are from a manuscript communication to Dr Clark, which is replete with valuable practical observations, and contains a more consistent and satisfactory account of the yellow fever (concerning which so much and such contradictory things have been written) than I have any where met with. Dr Clark intended to have incorporated it into the introductory discourse to a new edition of his work on the Diseases of hot Climates, for which he was preparing at the time of his first seizure, in October, 1804.

have given their suffrage in favour of mercury; and, though it certainly requires more extensive experience than we yet possess to enable us to determine the confidence we may place in it, there seems reason to hope that, in some states of remittent fever, it will prove a remedy of considerable efficacy.

Dr Clark was also of opinion that when ENGORGEMENT of the brain takes place in CONTINUED FEVER (a state, in which no medicine has hitherto been found effectual), calomel was very likely to succeed. - He, however, frankly acknowledges his inexperience of its effects, and the difficulty of discriminating between ENGORGEMENT and irritability of that organ. A further application of mercury, in which, so far as I know, he was original, was in paralytic and apoplectic affections. He considered it to succeed best in cases of fullness of habit; and thought it might operate by stimulating the languid absorbents, especially those of the brain. He had, indeed, great confidence in small doses of calomel long continued, in all cases where there was reason to suspect effusion into any of the cavities of the system; and it was in particular a favourite remedy of his in dyspnœa combined with irregular action of the heart. I learned the prac-

tice from him in paralytic and apoplectic cases about ten years ago; and my experience, so far as it goes, confirms its utility. In cases of dyspnoea with irregular action of the heart, I can speak with still greater confidence of the effects of calomel as an alterative. In favourable cases it will, in general, be found an effectual cure; and where there exists organic affection of the heart or large vessels, it is more powerful as a palliative, either alone or combined with squills or digitalis, than any other remedy that has been discovered.

Such are the principal points in which Dr Clark seems to me to have discovered or contributed to the establishment of new and useful methods of cure; and I trust, that whether the formidable nature of the diseases they are employed in, or the extent of the improvements is considered, they will give him an honourable place among the modern improvers of medical science.

J. R. FENWICK.

*Durham, October 22d, 1805.*



## APPENDIX.



TO DR FENWICK.

*Newcastle upon Tyne, 1st Sept. 1805.*

DEAR SIR,

THOUGH I have no expectation of presenting you with any new view of the professional excellence, or moral worth, of our late much valued friend Dr Clark, yet I cannot withhold that testimony on both those points, which twelve years' intimacy has afforded me.

Dr Clark's character for accuracy of discrimination was, I understand, established at an early period of his practice, by the skill he displayed in questioning his patient, and detecting causes that had escaped the notice of the medical attendants. The anxiety with which he watched the effects of the medicines adminis-

tered, deeply impressed the result on his memory. He gave his attention, indeed, exclusively to the study and practice of his profession. And however this voluntary withdrawing of the mind from the extensive range of general science and literature may diminish the enjoyments of the individual, the solid reputation of a physician is, perhaps, in no other way attainable. To the medical man, undoubtedly, a broad foundation of liberal knowledge, early laid, is indispensable to the ready apprehension of facts, and the sound exercise of the understanding in forming opinion; but how far the attempt to acquire eminence in the sister branches of science may be commendable in the physician, a few splendid instances in the profession of great and diversified intellectual attainments must not influence the decision. Medicine is a science where facts, the accumulation of ages, have proved insufficient for the establishment of any general principles for the guidance of the inexperienced: In its practical application it is nearly incommunicable; the individual must collect materials for himself, for here he cannot, he ought not, to see with other men's eyes. Fond of his profession, and devoting all his time to observation and reflection, Dr Clark came to consultations with his mind

stored with the most valuable of all knowledge, —knowledge acquired at the bed-side of his patient. Though fully conversant with the opinions of the best writers, he allowed no blind veneration of them to warp his judgment: Their opinions, when confirmed by his own observation, were identified with his general stock of established truths; but neither professional duty nor inclination allowed him to treasure up, for amusement or parade, those fanciful theories which later acquisitions in philosophy have nearly consigned to oblivion. His long-continued harassing sensations from bodily indisposition, often not even suspended during the night, were not sufficient to damp the ardour of his professional exertions. When summoned to the bed-side of the sick during such personal sufferings, his benevolence and his self-possession never forsook him. In the investigation of diseases arising from visceral affections, Doctor Clark gave the first example, I believe, to his brethren in this quarter, of the importance of paying minute attention to the state of the excretions. The originality of his views of employing the stimulant or evacuant effects of calomel in the cure of dysentery, the early stage of palsy, and acute rheumatism, are known and acknowledged. Mercury in his hands was

a safe and powerful auxiliary. His fearless procedure in cases where apparently contra-indicative means of relief were demanded, excited at once surprise and approbation. In those perplexing combinations, especially of pneumonic inflammation with hydropic affections, the truth and accuracy of his views were fully established. —The same clearness of detail employed in collecting the history of his patients ailment, was pursued in the instructions which he left for his guidance during the continuance of disease. When distance rendered frequent visits impossible, the plan of regimen and medicine which he gave was drawn up in such clear and explicit terms, that even a nurse of common capacity was competent to carry it into effect.

To the patient or the friend whose taste or habits of thinking made professional points interesting, disdaining all mysterious reserve, he readily disclosed his opinions; for he well knew that freedom of inquiry was the true remedy for those vain fears which haunt the constitutionally timid, or those equally vain hopes which the impudent quack is ever ready to excite in the credulous invalid. Speaking his undisguised sentiments, and retaining his native simplicity of manners, the warm attachment of his patients was added to their high respect for his abilities.

The reward of this earnest, this indefatigable attention to the welfare of those committed to his care, was the possession of that full confidence in his skill and integrity, which a life spent in their service so highly merited.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours most respectfully,

J. RAMSAY.











